

**Introduced by Senator Wright**  
**(Coauthors: Senators Cox, Negrete McLeod, and Strickland)**  
(Coauthor: Assembly Member Hall)

February 5, 2010

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An act to add Section 1367.655 to the Health and Safety Code, and to add Section 10123.205 to the Insurance Code, relating to health care coverage.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 961, as introduced, Wright. Health care coverage: cancer treatment.

Existing law, the Knox-Keene Health Care Service Plan Act of 1975, provides for the licensure and regulation of health care service plans by the Department of Managed Health Care and makes a willful violation of the act a crime. Existing law also provides for the regulation of health insurers by the Department of Insurance. Existing law requires health care service plan contracts and health insurance policies to provide coverage for all generally medically accepted cancer screening tests and requires those plans and policies to also provide coverage for the treatment of breast cancer. Existing law imposes various requirements on contracts and policies that cover prescription drug benefits.

This bill would prohibit health care service plan contracts and health insurance policies that provide coverage for cancer chemotherapy treatment that is taken orally from charging or otherwise requiring a copayment or other charge for each of those dispensed prescriptions in excess of a certain unspecified amount.

Because a willful violation of the bill's requirements relative to health care service plans would be a crime, the bill would impose a state-mandated local program.

The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.

This bill would provide that no reimbursement is required by this act for a specified reason.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.  
State-mandated local program: yes.

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

1 SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the  
2 following:

3 (a) There are 10 million Americans currently living with cancer.

4 (b) Approximately 1.5 million new cases of cancer will be  
5 diagnosed in the United States in 2010.

6 (c) In California, 27, 725 men and 26, 735 women are expected  
7 to die from cancer this year.

8 (d) Nearly one out of every two Californians born today will  
9 develop cancer at some point in their lives.

10 (e) It is likely that one in five Californians will die of cancer.

11 (f) It is the intent of the Legislature that a health plan or insurer  
12 that includes on its formulary, or authorizes on the basis of medical  
13 necessity, oral medications used to treat cancer shall not require  
14 copayments or other charges for those medications at a level that  
15 effectively makes the medication inaccessible to a patient.

16 SEC. 2. Section 1367.655 is added to the Health and Safety  
17 Code, to read:

18 1367.655. A health care service plan contract issued, amended,  
19 or renewed on or after January 1, 2011, that provides coverage for  
20 chemotherapy treatment that is taken orally shall not charge or  
21 otherwise require a copayment or other charge for each of those  
22 dispensed prescriptions in excess of \_\_\_\_ dollars.

23 SEC. 3. Section 10123.205 is added to the Insurance Code, to  
24 read:

25 10123.205. A health insurance policy issued, amended, or  
26 renewed on or after January 1, 2011, that provides coverage for  
27 chemotherapy treatment that is taken orally shall not charge or

1 otherwise require a copayment or other charge for each of those  
2 dispensed prescriptions in excess of \_\_\_\_ dollars.

3 SEC. 4. No reimbursement is required by this act pursuant to  
4 Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California Constitution because  
5 the only costs that may be incurred by a local agency or school  
6 district will be incurred because this act creates a new crime or  
7 infraction, eliminates a crime or infraction, or changes the penalty  
8 for a crime or infraction, within the meaning of Section 17556 of  
9 the Government Code, or changes the definition of a crime within  
10 the meaning of Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California  
11 Constitution.